

Leviticus 21 - Thursday, February 11th, 2010

21:1 And the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, 2 except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; 3 also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. 4 Otherwise he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.'

- Now, the Lord is telling Moses to speak to the priests telling them to not defile themselves by coming into contact with dead people.
- There's an exception if it's an immediate family member, and the reason for this is that they can't profane themselves as priests.
- This speaks to the need for purity in our lives as a priesthood of believers, which is what we are called in the New Testament.

1 Peter 2:4-5, 9 4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ...9 you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; NKJV

- It's really important that we understand this truth otherwise we'll be more prone to assume that chapter's like this are not for us.
- The Old Testament conceals what the New Testament reveals and for us to see that changes the whole complexion of its meaning.
- Now, I'm able to see how this applies to me as it relates to my purity. It's vital for us as believers, especially leaders, to not be profaned.

"This chapter is full of restrictions and cautions against anything that might defile the priests, the sons of Aaron. The holiness of God was set in a clear light by the care that there should be no ceremonial pollution or personal defect in those who ministered before his presence. What Aaron and his sons were in the ancient typical worship, that Jesus and his people are in the spiritual dispensation which has taken its place. "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."

F.B. Meyer Devotionals on Leviticus (http://preceptaustin.org/leviticus_sermon_illustrations_2.htm)

5'They shall not make any bald place on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh.

- We covered this previously where God forbids them to shave their heads, cut their beards or cut their flesh as those in the occult did.
- Here again, we see that God wants His people, and especially His priests, imitating Him in Holiness, not the Egyptians in worldliness.

How holy we should be "in all manner of living"! What may be innocent and natural for others would be wrong and inconsistent in us. Even the pointing of the beard after the fashion of the nations around, and for appearance' sake, was forbidden them; and contact with death in the home of domestic mourning. These, with many such like cautions, indicate that our spiritual separation for the service of God must enter into the minutest details. The clothes we wear, the books we read, the amusements we engage in, the details of the home-life — will all be affected by the thought, "I have been set apart for God; the anointing of the Spirit is on me; I am called to offer Him the bread of a holy life; I may not do as others, who have not realized the sacredness of life, as I do; and who may permit without compunction what I forego."

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6 They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.7 They shall not take a wife who is a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God.8 Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I the LORD, who sanctify you, am holy.

- Suffice it to say that God is laying down some pretty strict standards and rightfully so. It is critical that they marry only godly women.
- Why does God take this so seriously? Well, I can tell you from my own personal experience as a pastor, that this is an absolute must!
- In order for a man to minister in the "priestly service" to which he is called, his wife has to be supportive of him and pure before God.

9 The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be burned with fire.

- Here, God takes it a step further in going from talking about a man's wife, to talking about a man's daughter. The principle is the same.
- In other words, it's extremely important that a man, especially one who serves in the ministry, has his house in order or he's profaned.

10 'He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; 11 nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother; 12 nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.

- This is interesting because it seems to indicate that when tragedy strikes a high priest, he is to continue his priestly duties in spite of it.
- The reason is that the high priest has been anointed with oil and consecrated in service and could be profaned or made common.
- In other words, this is a high calling, and carries with it certain restrictions to keep the high priest separated, and consecrated.

OTHERS MAY—YOU CANNOT

If God has called you to be really like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put upon you such demands of obedience, that you will not be able to measure yourself by other Christians; and in many ways, He will seem to let other good people do things which He will never let you do.

Other Christians and ministers, who seem very religious and useful, can push themselves, pull wires and work schemes to carry out their Christian goals, but these things you simply cannot do. Others may boast of their work or their writings or their success, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing, and if you ever try it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, but most likely God will keep you poor, because He wants you to have something far better than gold, namely, a helpless dependence on Him and the joy of seeing Him supply your needs day by day out of an unseen Treasury.

The Lord may let others be honored and keep you hidden and unappreciated because He wants to produce some choice, fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade. He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it, but He will make you work on and on without others knowing how much you are doing; and then, to make your work still more precious, He may let others get the credit for the work which you have done, and thus make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes.

The Holy Spirit will rebuke you for little words or deeds or even feelings, or for wasting your time, which other Christians never seem to be concerned about, but you must make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign and He has a right to do whatever He pleases with His own. He may not explain to you a thousand things which puzzle your reason in the way He deals with you, but if you will just submit yourself to Him in all things, He will wrap you up in a jealous love and bestow upon you many blessings which come only to those who are very near to His heart.

Settle it then, that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that He does not seem to use with others. Now, when you are so possessed with the living God that your secret heart becomes pleased and delighted with this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, then you will have entered the very vestibule of heaven itself.

—G.D. Watson (1845-1924)

13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity.14 A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot -- these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife.15 Nor shall he profane his posterity among his people, for I the LORD sanctify him."

- God now directs this to the high priest as he previously did with the priests in that those in priestly service must marry a godly wife.

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,17 "Speak to Aaron, saying: 'No man of your descendants in succeeding generations, who has any defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God. 18 For any man who has a defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred face or any limb too long,19 a man who has a broken foot or broken hand,20 or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch.21 No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD. He has a defect; he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God.22 He may eat the bread of his God, both the most holy and the holy;23 only he shall not go near the veil or approach the altar, because he has a defect, lest he profane My sanctuaries; for I the LORD sanctify them.'" 24 And Moses told it to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel.

- This is one of those passages that can be easily misunderstood because it lists defects that would disqualify one from priestly service.

- It's important we understand that this has a spiritual and prophetic application as it relates to and points to our High Priest Jesus Christ.

- In other words, in the typology, Jesus was found to be without blemish, without defect, and thus He was qualified as our High Priest.

1 Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: KJV

This is a high ideal; and it is only practicable to those who realize the thrice-made announcement of our text, that God will sanctify us: setting us apart for Himself — by the precious blood of Christ, by the anointing of the Spirit, and by the separation of our thoughts, and aims, and practices.